



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Mr. Bujar NISHANI,
President of the Republic

General Debate
of the
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Mr. President,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We gather here, every year, to share our analysis, our views and comments on the course of world events. We also take this opportunity to share our concerns, meet and interact and try to offer our best commitment to finding appropriate solutions to current and future challenges.

A year has passed since last session and the world has further changed. Development and economic growth in many countries have taken out of poverty line hundreds of millions of people. Societies throughout the world stand today for more rights, and ask for effective political participation. Democracy, human right and increased woman participation to public and social life, have all globally improved.

Yet, despite efforts, achievements and progress, many issues continue to be a source of preoccupation. Notwithstanding an unprecedented global awareness, climate change remains a major source of preoccupation. The continued deteriorating global economic climate continues to be a permanent disturbing source of anxiety everywhere. Threats to peace and security in different parts of the world show how far we still are from achieving the desired global security. It is therefore only just that we expect the United Nations, the organization we have placed at the center of international architecture, to be more responsive, efficient, effective and transparent.

Mr. President,

This year Albania celebrates the Centenary of its Independence. While marking this important date and looking through our history in these ten decades, we notice with satisfaction that more than half of this time is marked by a successful cooperation and active participation of Albanian State to the United Nations life.

Our commitment has grown over years and has embraced almost every aspect of the UN activity, including peacekeeping operations.

During the last years, we have been particularly devoted to the ongoing efforts to reform the system. As the UN system has further developed and its action become more complex, the need for more coherence and efficiency of the whole has become a must. This is particularly evident for the UN development Assistance.

As one of the pilot countries of “Delivering as One” approach, we hosted last June the 5th High Level Conference on Delivering as One. Tirana Conference adopted an outcome document with concrete, and we hope valuable recommendations in the light of the approaching QCPR. We know now that what started as a try-out idea has come a long way in a relatively short time. A growing number of countries are looking more clearly and closely to the benefits of having the UN work and implement assistance program with more coherence and efficiency. “Delivering as One” has convincingly shown in practice how the operational activities of the United Nations could be delivered with higher efficiency and how the UN system can do better and more with less, in reaching the national and internationally agreed development goals.

Mr. President,

I’m proud to represent a country and a society, which is widely known for its broadmindedness, tolerance and acceptance of the “Other”. Albanians are probably the unique example in my region that despite having gone through centuries long difficulties in their history have always preserved and cherished the values of freedom and respect for the “different other” that rests at the foundation of modern times concept of Human Rights.

The respect of Albanians toward each other rights and individuality is expressed foremost in an exemplary religious harmony.

It has transcended in the acceptance and respect of other cultures, ethnicities and civilizations, including, with special care and attention to those who came to find a safe refuge from the horrors of War. Albanians have risked their own lives or have gone miles beyond their economic capabilities to rescue and save those in need knocking on their door.

It is against this background that Albania remains a strong believer in the dialogue among civilizations and will never stop engaging actively in bridging the differences among the wider membership, on the issues pertaining to Human Rights agenda. It is for this reason that the current Albanian Presidency of the Council of Europe has chosen as its theme: "United in Diversity".

Dialogue among different cultures and civilizations should be seen as an ongoing process that requires dedication, goodwill and care. We cannot permit that the reckless sporadic actions of disruptive groups obstruct us from a genuine effort to reach a better understanding of each other in a world everyday more globalized. Although saddened and bitter by a good-for-nothing video deliberately targeting what Muslims everywhere consider as sacred, the Albanian society, Muslims and Christians alike, expressed their indignation simply by ignoring such nonsense. We regret that in some parts of the world this event did not meet the same reaction. It was instead used to fuel blind violence by angry hopeless crowds with fatal consequences. We have to make it clear. Forms of terrorism, extremist acts of isolated ill intentioned groups should never be mistaken with the position or be identified with the attitude of entire societies and governments. Yet, no legitimate anger can excuse illegitimate violent acts that governments, societies, political and religious leaders should firmly oppose.

We condemn with indignation the terrorist act against American Embassy in Libya and ask for the punishment of the authors. We also condemn any act of violent protest against the western embassies, whose mission is to promote good understanding and cooperation among countries and nations.

Mr. President,

With its foreign policy of peace and good relations with all other countries, its modest but important contribution in international missions of peace and human rights protection through its good neighborly policy as well as moderate and constructive role in the region, Albania has turned into a

producer and direct contributor of stability and security in regional and global scales. We are determined to maintain and further build on this record.

Today, Albania participates in peacekeeping missions in several international operations in the framework of the United Nations and other regional security organizations, such as in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, and others. My country acknowledges and supports every effort for global peace and security and will continue to support all efforts of the United Nations, NATO and other actors promoting peace, stability and security in the world.

Mr. President,

Peace and security in the world continue to be challenged by tyranny and oppression in various parts of the world. We reiterate our strong condemnation of the ferocious repression against freedom loving people of Syria, who are suffering a primitive bloodshed by a regime that has irreversibly lost its legitimacy to lead and represent the Syrian people. Let me join all those who call the United Nations Security Council to step up and, in conformity with United Nations Charter, fulfill its mandate in the preservation of peace and security. It is hard to believe that one can be or remain indifferent to such terrible events that unfold every day in Syria since one year and a half, with tens of thousands of human losses, wide spread deliberate destruction and suffering that have already brought the country decades behind. Haven't we already learned the hard lessons of similar mistakes in past tragedies in Rwanda and Bosnia?

Albania fully supports the peace process between Palestine and Israel. Albania reiterates its position in support of a two state solution: a secure State of Israel and a viable State of Palestine, living side by side with each other in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Road Map. Both peoples of Palestine and Israel are exhausted by this never-ending conflict and their leaders should shoulder the legitimate quest for freedom and peace with long-term vision and goodwill against extremists. The world longs to see the

peace process in the Middle East turn from a pattern of stagnation into a model of inspiration for difficult yet indispensable compromises.

Albania remains deeply worried by the Iranian nuclear program, which continues to raise serious questions as to its nature instead of providing answers and guarantees as requested over years. We must prevent Iran from becoming nuclear threat.

Mr. President,

On November 2012 this year, my country will celebrate the Centenary of Independence. We will commemorate a century full of diverse events, not always among the happiest ones.

Many have described the Albanian people as survivors in front of harsh encounters with history. They are not wrong: Albanians have suffered unwanted wars, forced movement from their lands, assaults and attempts to annihilate them, unjust partitions and, during the second half of the 20th century, have bravely resisted to five decades of communism. All this has come with a stiff price. Today we look to the future with hope, deliverance and strong confidence that the following century will be marked by continuous peace, economic progress, cultural and intellectual revitalization.

Our region, once the trouble hotspot and the sick area of Europe, has been profoundly and positively transformed. Six new states have been born out of Former Yugoslavia in the course of the last two decades.

We all know it has not been easy and we all know why. But, what matters most is that everywhere in the region, societies have evolved, ghosts of the past have left the place to new realities and people, in particular the young generation, are more than ever turned to the future.

Let me point out at this point that the establishment of the independent State of Kosova five years ago has turned into an important factor of peace and stability in the South East European Region. It has strengthened and built against all kind of obstacles created by those who still cannot accept reality

and see the truth in the eyes. As time passes, Independent Kosova is being recognized and accepted by an increasing number, close to half of UN member-states.

The Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, rendered in 2010 upon a specific request from Serbia, clearly ruled that the Independence of Kosova was in conformity with the International Law. Just a few days ago the Republic of Kosova reached at another level of state consolidation with the ending of Supervised Phase of the Independence by the International community.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the authorities of Kosova for their continued progress in building and strengthening a democratic state and a multiethnic society and call on all those countries that have not yet recognized Kosova to consider the review and assessment of this irreversible reality in the South Eastern European region. Recognition of Kosova is an act of justice for people that have suffered for too long and a net contribution to peace and stability in the Balkans.

We have heard before and we are prepared to listen to the same old redundant arguments from Serbia regarding Kosovo. What failed to be achieved by war won't be carried out through propaganda either. While Serbia's leaders speak of partition, redraw of borders, while they make troubling statements denying genocide in Srebrenica, one is right to ask whether the past continues to loom there over the present, obscuring reality and troubling their vision to the future.

Mr. President,

Albania has maintained strong positive economic growth, despite the impact of the global financial and economic crisis. The pursuits of macro-prudential policies and well-anchored structural reforms, focusing on privatizations, fiscal probity, trade liberalization, the business climate, energy and financial sectors, have enabled Albania's economy to be the most resilient of South-Eastern European economies. Over the period 2007-2012 the average economic growth has been 5% to GDP, peaking in 2008 at 8% of GDP. From

2008, Albania has a flat tax of 10%, corporate tax has decreased from 25% to 10%, personal income tax from 23% to 10% and tens of fees have simply been zeroed. The Global Competitiveness Report 2011-2012 of the World Economic Forum ranks Albania at the 78th position out of 142 countries/economies. Equally, the World Bank Report "Doing Business, 2012", on 'Ease of doing business', ranks Albania 82nd out of 183 economies. On "getting credit" and "protecting investors" Albania ranks respectively at 24th and 16th positions putting Albania among the top reformer countries.

In our road towards sustained development, progress and prosperity, we remain fully engaged and committed to carry out all reforms and to take all measures required to successfully continue on the path of European Union integration. This is not an alternative but a long-term choice carefully pursued over the years and we are determined to make it happen.

In the weeks ahead, we expect a favorable decision of the Council of Ministers of the European Union to our bid for the status of candidate country to the EU. A merit based decision, it will constitute another milestone into Albania's European integration journey, putting our commitments and our responsibilities at a higher stage of the whole process.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, let me assure you that Albania remains committed to international cooperation and is determined to continue to offer its contribution in advancing peace, freedom and security, respect for human rights, fighting poverty, promoting sustainable development and prosperity, and, last but not least, protecting the environment.

Thank you for your attention!